ABRAHAM LINCOLN

BY GEORGE BANCROFT

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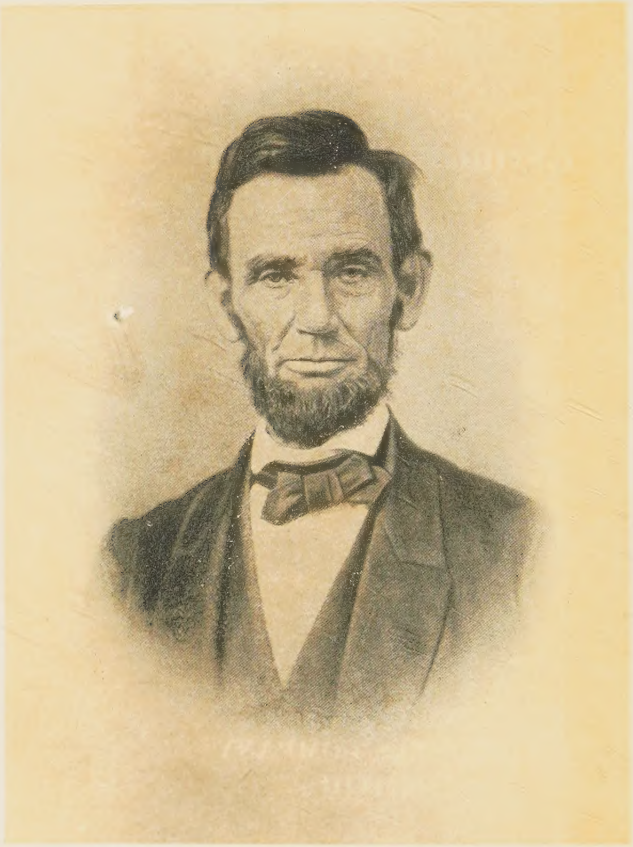

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

A TRIBUTE

BY

GEORGE BANCROFT

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THAT God rules in the affairs of men is as certain as any truth of physical science. On the great moving Power which is from the beginning hangs the world of the senses and the world of thought and action. Eternal wisdom marshals the great procession of the nations, working in patient continuity through the ages, never halting and never abrupt, encompassing all events in its oversight, and ever effecting its will, though mortals may slumber in apathy or oppose with madness. Kings are lifted up or thrown down, nations come and go, republics flourish and wither, dynasties pass away like a tale that is told; but nothing is by chance, though men, in their igno-

rance of causes, may think so. The deeds of time are governed, as well as judged, by the decrees of eternity. The caprice of fleeting existences bends to the immovable Omnipotence, which plants its foot on all the centuries and has neither change of purpose nor repose. Sometimes, like a messenger through the thick darkness of night, it steps along mysterious ways; but when the hour strikes for a people, or for mankind, to pass into a new form of being, unseen hands draw the bolts from the gates of futurity; an all-subduing influence prepares the minds of men for the coming revolution; those who plan resistance find themselves in conflict with the will of Providence rather than with human devices; and all hearts and all understandings, most of all the opinions and influences of the unwilling, are wonderfully attracted and compelled to bear forward

the change, which becomes more an obedience to the law of universal nature than submission to the arbitrament of man.

In the fullness of time a Republic rose up in the wilderness of America. Thousands of years had passed away before this child of the ages could be born. From whatever there was of good in the systems of former centuries she drew her nourishment; the wrecks of the past were her warnings. With the deepest sentiment of faith fixed in her inmost nature, she disenthralled religion from bondage to temporal power, that her worship might be worship only in spirit and in truth. The wisdom which had passed from India through Greece, with what Greece had added of her own; the jurisprudence of Rome; the mediæval municipalities; the Teutonic method of representation; the political experience of England; the be-

nignant wisdom of the expositors of the law of nature and of nations in France and Holland, all shed on her their selectest influence. She washed the gold of political wisdom from the sands wherever it was found; she cleft it from the rocks; she gleaned it among ruins. Out of all the discoveries of statesmen and sages, out of all the experience of past human life, she compiled a perennial political philosophy, the primordial principles of national ethics. The wise men of Europe sought the best government in a mixture of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy; America went behind these names to extract from them the vital elements of social forms, and blend them harmoniously in the free commonwealth, which comes nearest to the illustration of the natural equality of all men. She intrusted the guardianship of established rights to law,

the movements of reform to the spirit of the people, and drew her force from the happy reconciliation of both.

Republics had heretofore been limited to small cantons, or cities and their dependencies; America, doing that of which the like had not before been known upon the earth, or believed by kings and statesmen to be possible, extended her Republic across a continent. Under her auspices the vine of liberty took deep root and filled the land; the hills were covered with its shadow; its boughs were like the goodly cedars, and reached unto both oceans. The fame of this only daughter of freedom went out into all the lands of the earth; from her the human race drew hope.

Neither hereditary monarchy nor hereditary aristocracy planted itself on our soil; the only hereditary condition that

fastened itself upon us was servitude. Nature works in sincerity, and is ever true to its law. The bee hives honey; the viper distills poison; the vine stores its juices, and so do the poppy and the upas. In like manner, every thought and every action ripens its seed, each according to its kind. In the individual man, and still more in a nation, a just idea gives life, and progress, and glory; a false conception portends disaster, shame, and death. A hundred and twenty years ago a West Jersey Quaker wrote: "This trade of importing slaves is dark gloominess hanging over the land; the consequences will be grievous to posterity." At the North the growth of slavery was arrested by natural causes; in the region nearest the Tropics it throve rankly, and worked itself into the organism of the rising States. Virginia stood

between the two, with soil and climate and resources demanding free labor, yet capable of the profitable employment of the slave. She was the land of great statesmen, and they saw the danger of her being whelmed under the rising flood in time to struggle against the delusions of avarice and pride. Ninety-four years ago the legislature of Virginia addressed the British King, saying that the trade in slaves was "of great inhumanity," was opposed to the "security and happiness" of their constituents, "would in time have the most destructive influence," and "endanger their very existence." And the King answered them that, "upon pain of his highest displeasure, the importation of slaves should not be in any respect obstructed." "Pharisaical Britain," wrote Franklin in behalf of Virginia, "to pride thyself in setting free a single slave that

happened to land on thy coasts, while thy laws continue a traffic whereby so many hundreds of thousands are dragged into a slavery that is entailed on their posterity." "A serious view of this subject," said Patrick Henry in 1773, "gives a gloomy prospect to future times." In the same year George Mason wrote to the legislature of Virginia: "The laws of impartial Providence may avenge our injustice upon our posterity." Conforming his conduct to his convictions, Jefferson, in Virginia, and in the Continental Congress, with the approval of Edmund Pendleton, branded the slave trade as piracy; and he fixed in the Declaration of Independence, as the corner stone of America: "All men are created equal, with an unalienable right to liberty." On the first organization of temporary governments for the conti-

nental domain, Jefferson, but for the default of New Jersey, would, in 1784, have consecrated every part of that territory to freedom. In the formation of the national Constitution Virginia, opposed by a part of New England, vainly struggled to abolish the slave trade at once and forever; and when the ordinance of 1787 was introduced by Nathan Dane without the clause prohibiting slavery, it was through the favorable disposition of Virginia and the South that the clause of Jefferson was restored, and the whole Northwestern territory—all the territory that then belonged to the Nation—was reserved for the labor of freemen.

The hope prevailed in Virginia that the abolition of the slave trade would bring with it the gradual abolition of slavery; but the expectation was doomed to disappointment. In supporting incipient

measures for emancipation, Jefferson en
countered difficulties greater than he coul
overcome; and after vain wrestlings, th
words that broke from him, "I tremble fo
my country when I reflect that God i
just, that His justice can not sleep for
ever," were words of despair. It was th
desire of Washington's heart that Vir
ginia should remove slavery by a publi
act; and as the prospects of a genera
emancipation grew more and more dim
he, in utter hopelessness of the action o
the State, did all that he could by be
queathing freedom to his own slaves
Good and true men had, from the days o
1776, suggested the colonizing of th
negro in the home of his ancestors; bu
the idea of colonization was thought t
increase the difficulty of emancipation
and, in spite of strong support, while i
accomplished much good for Africa, i

proved impracticable as a remedy at home. Madison, who in early life disliked slavery so much that he wished "to depend as little as possible on the labor of slaves;" Madison, who held that where slavery exists "the republican theory becomes fallacious;" Madison, who in the last years of his life would not consent to the annexation of Texas, lest his countrymen should fill it with slaves; Madison, who said: "Slavery is the greatest evil under which the Nation labors—a portentous evil—an evil moral, political, and economical—a sad blot on our free country"—went mournfully into old age with the cheerless words: "No satisfactory plan has yet been devised for taking out the stain."

The men of the Revolution passed away. A new generation sprang up, impatient that an institution to which they clung should be condemned as inhuman,

unwise, and unjust. In the throes of discontent at the self-reproach of their fathers, and blinded by the luster of wealth to be acquired by the culture of a new staple, they devised the theory that slavery, which they would not abolish, was not evil, but good. They turned on the friends of colonization, and confidently demanded: "Why take black men from a civilized and Christian country, where their labor is a source of immense gain, and a power to control the markets of the world, and send them to a land of ignorance, idolatry, and indolence, which was the home of their forefathers, but not theirs? Slavery is a blessing. Were they not in their ancestral land naked, scarcely lifted above brutes, ignorant of the course of the sun, controlled by nature? And in their new abode have they not been taught to know the difference of the seasons, to

plow and plant and reap, to drive oxen, to tame the horse, to exchange their scanty dialect for the richest of all the languages among men, and the stupid adoration of follies for the purest religion? And since slavery is good for the blacks, it is good for their masters, bringing opulence and the opportunity of educating a race. The slavery of the black is good in itself; he shall serve the white man forever." And nature, which better understood the quality of fleeting interest and passion, laughed as it caught the echo, "man" and "forever!"

A regular development of pretensions followed the new declaration with logical consistency. Under the old declaration every one of the States had retained, each for itself, the right of manumitting all slaves by an ordinary act of legislation; now the power of the people over servitude

through their legislatures was curtailed, and the privileged class was swift in imposing legal and constitutional obstructions on the people themselves. The power of emancipation was narrowed or taken away. The slave might not be disquieted by education. There remained an unconfessed consciousness that the system of bondage was wrong, and a restless memory that it was at variance with the true American tradition; its safety was therefore to be secured by political organization. The generation that made the Constitution took care for the predominance of freedom in Congress by the ordinance of Jefferson; the new school aspired to secure for slavery an equality of votes in the Senate, and, while it hinted at an organic act that should concede to the collective South a veto power on national legislation. it assumed that each State

separately had the right to revise and nullify laws of the United States, according to the discretion of its judgment.

The new theory hung as a bias on the foreign relations of the country; there could be no recognition of Haiti, nor even of the American colony of Liberia; and the world was given to understand that the establishment of free labor in Cuba would be a reason for wresting that island from Spain. Territories were annexed—Louisiana, Florida, Texas, half of Mexico; slavery must have its share in them all, and it accepted for a time a dividing line between the unquestioned domain of free labor and that in which involuntary labor was to be tolerated. A few years passed away, and the new school, strong and arrogant, demanded and received an apology for applying the Jefferson proviso to Oregon.

The application of that proviso was interrupted for three Administrations, but justice moved steadily onward. In the news that the men of California had chosen freedom, Calhoun heard the knell of parting slavery, and on his deathbed he counseled secession. Washington and Jefferson and Madison had died despairing of the abolition of slavery; Calhoun died in despair at the growth of freedom. His system rushed irresistibly to its natural development. The death struggle for California was followed by a short truce; but the new school of politicians, who said that slavery was not evil, but good, soon sought to recover the ground they had lost, and, confident of securing Kansas, they demanded that the established line in the Territories between freedom and slavery should be blotted out. The country, believing in the strength and enterprise

and expansive energy of freedom, made answer, though reluctantly: "Be it so; let there be no strife between brethren; let freedom and slavery compete for the Territories on equal terms, in a fair field, under an impartial administration;" and on this theory, if on any, the contest might have been left to the decision of time.

The South started back in appallment from its victory, for it knew that a fair competition foreboded its defeat. But where could it now find an ally to save it from its own mistake? In a great republic, as was observed more than two thousand years ago, any attempt to overturn the state owes its strength to aid from some branch of the government. The Chief Justice of the United States, without any necessity or occasion, volunteered to come to the rescue of the theory of

slavery; and from his court there lay no appeal but to the bar of humanity and history. Against the Constitution, against the memory of the Nation, against a previous decision, against a series of enactments, he decided that the slave is property; that slave property is entitled to no less protection than any other property; that the Constitution upholds it in every Territory against any act of a local legislature, and even against Congress itself; or, as the President for that term tersely promulgated the saying, "Kansas is as much a slave State as South Carolina or Georgia; slavery, by virtue of the Constitution, exists in every Territory." The municipal character of slavery being thus taken away, and slave property decreed to be "sacred," the authority of the courts was invoked to introduce it by the comity of law into States where slavery had been

abolished, and in one of the courts of the United States a judge pronounced the African slave trade legitimate, and numerous and powerful advocates demanded its restoration.

Moreover, the Chief Justice, in his elaborate opinion, announced what had never been heard from any magistrate of Greece or Rome; what was unknown to civil law, and canon law, and feudal law, and common law, and constitutional law; unknown to Jay, to Rutledge, Ellsworth, and Marshall—that there are "slave races." The spirit of evil is intensely logical. Having the authority of this decision, five States swiftly followed the earlier example of a sixth, and opened the way for reducing the free negro to bondage; the migrating free negro became a slave if he but entered within the jurisdiction of a seventh; and an eighth, from its extent and soil and

mineral resources destined to incalculable greatness, closed its eyes on its coming prosperity, and enacted, as by Taney's dictum it had the right to do, that every free black man who would live within its limits must accept the condition of slavery for himself and his posterity.

Only one step more remained to be taken. Jefferson and the leading statesmen of his day held fast to the idea that the enslavement of the African was socially, morally, and politically wrong. The new school was founded exactly upon the opposite idea; and they resolved, first, to distract the Democratic party, for which the Supreme Court had now furnished the means, and then to establish a new government, with negro slavery for its corner stone, as socially, morally, and politically right.

As the Presidential election drew on,

one of the great traditional parties did not make its appearance; the other reeled as it sought to preserve its old position, and the candidate who most nearly represented its best opinion, driven by patriotic zeal, roamed the country from end to end to speak for union, eager, at least, to confront its enemies, yet not having hope that it would find its deliverance through him. The storm rose to a whirlwind; who should allay its wrath? The most experienced statesman of the country had failed; there was no hope from those who were great after the flesh: could relief come from one whose wisdom was like the wisdom of little children?

The choice of America fell on a man born west of the Alleghanies, in the cabin of poor people of Hardin County, Kentucky—Abraham Lincoln.

His mother could read but not write;

his father could do neither; but his parents sent him, with an old spelling book, to school, and he learned in his childhood to do both.

When eight years old he floated down the Ohio with his father on a raft, which bore the family and all their possessions to the shore of Indiana; and, child as he was, he gave help as they toiled through dense forests to the interior of Spencer County. There, in the land of free labor, he grew up in a log cabin, with the solemn solitude for his teacher in his meditative hours. Of Asiatic literature he knew only the Bible; of Greek, Latin, and mediæval, no more than the translation of Æsop's Fables; of English, John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. The traditions of George Fox and William Penn passed to him dimly along the lines of two centuries through his ancestors, who were Quakers.

Otherwise his education was altogether American. The Declaration of Independence was his compendium of political wisdom, the Life of Washington his constant study, and something of Jefferson and Madison reached him through Henry Clay, whom he honored from boyhood. For the rest, from day to day, he lived the life of the American people, walked in its light, reasoned with its reason, thought with its power of thought, felt the beatings of its mighty heart, and so was in every way a child of nature, a child of the West, a child of America.

At nineteen, feeling impulses of ambition to get on in the world, he engaged himself to go down the Mississippi in a flatboat, receiving ten dollars a month for his wages, and afterwards he made the trip once more. At twenty-one he drove his father's cattle, as the family migrated

to Illinois, and split rails to fence in the new homestead in the wild. At twenty-three he was a captain of volunteers in the Black Hawk war. He kept a store; he learned something of surveying; but of English literature he added to Bunyan nothing but Shakespeare's plays. At twenty-five he was elected to the legislature of Illinois, where he served eight years. At twenty-seven he was admitted to the bar. In 1837 he chose his home at Springfield, the beautiful center of the richest land in the State. In 1847 he was a member of the national Congress, where he voted about forty times in favor of the principle of the Jefferson proviso. In 1849 he sought, eagerly but unsuccessfully, the place of Commissioner of the Land Office, and he refused an appointment that would have transferred his residence to Oregon. In 1854 he gave his influence to elect from

Illinois to the American Senate a Democrat who would certainly do justice to Kansas. In 1858, as the rival of Douglas, he went before the people of the mighty Prairie State, saying: "This Union can not permanently endure half slave and half free; the Union will not be dissolved, but the house will cease to be divided;" and now, in 1861, with no experience whatever as an executive officer, while States were madly flying from their orbit, and wise men knew not where to find counsel, this descendant of Quakers, this pupil of Bunyan, this offspring of the great West, was elected President of America.

He measured the difficulty of the duty that devolved upon him, and was resolved to fulfill it. As on the eleventh of February, 1861, he left Springfield, which for a quarter of a century had been his happy

home, to the crowd of his friends and neighbors, whom he was never more to meet, he spoke a solemn farewell: "I know not how soon I shall see you again. A duty has devolved upon me, greater than that which has devolved upon any other man since Washington. He never would have succeeded except for the aid of Divine Providence, upon which he at all times relied. On the same Almighty Being I place my reliance. Pray that I may receive that Divine assistance, without which I can not succeed, but with which success is certain." To the men of Indiana he said: "I am but an accidental, temporary instrument; it is your business to rise up and preserve the Union and liberty." At the capital of Ohio he said: "Without a name, without a reason why I should have a name, there has fallen upon me a task such as did not rest even upon

the Father of his Country." At various places in New York, especially at Albany, before the legislature, which tendered him the united support of the great Empire State, he said: "While I hold myself the humblest of all the individuals who have ever been elevated to the Presidency, I have a more difficult task to perform than any of them. I bring a true heart to the work. I must rely upon the people of the whole country for support; and with their sustaining aid, even I, humble as I am, can not fail to carry the ship of state safely through the storm." To the assembly of New Jersey, at Trenton, he explained: "I shall take the ground I deem most just to the North, the East, the West, the South, and the whole country, in good temper, certainly with no malice to any section. I am devoted to peace, but it may be necessary to put the

foot down firmly." In the old Independence Hall of Philadelphia he said: "I have never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence, which gave liberty, not alone to the people of this country, but to the world in all future time. If the country can not be saved without giving up that principle, I would rather be assassinated on the spot than surrender it. I have said nothing but what I am willing to live and die by."

Traveling in the dead of night to escape assassination, Lincoln arrived at Washington nine days before his inauguration. The outgoing President, at the opening of the session of Congress, had still kept as the majority of his advisers men engaged in treason; had declared that in case of even an "imaginary" ap-

prehension of danger from notions of freedom among the slaves, "disunion would become inevitable." Lincoln and others had questioned the opinion of Taney; such impugning he ascribed to the "factious temper of the times." The favorite doctrine of the majority of the Democratic party on the power of a Territorial legislature over slavery he condemned as an attack on "the sacred rights of property." The State legislatures, he insisted, must repeal what he called "their unconstitutional and obnoxious enactments," and which, if such, were "null and void," or "it would be impossible for any human power to save the Union." Nay, if these unimportant acts were not repealed, "the injured States would be justified in revolutionary resistance to the Government of the Union." He maintained that no State might secede at its

sovereign will and pleasure; that the Union was meant for perpetuity, and that Congress might attempt to preserve it, but only by conciliation; that "the sword was not placed in their hands to preserve it by force;" that "the last desperate remedy of a despairing people" would be "an explanatory amendment recognizing the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States." The American Union he called "a confederacy" of States, and he thought it a duty to make the appeal for the amendment "before any of these States should separate themselves from the Union." The views of the lieutenant-general, containing some patriotic advice, "conceded the right of secession," pronounced a quadruple rupture of the Union "a smaller evil than the reuniting of the fragments by the sword," and "eschewed the idea of invading a seceded

State." After changes in the Cabinet, the President informed Congress that "matters were still worse;" that "the South suffered serious grievances," which should be redressed "in peace." The day after this message the flag of the Union was fired upon from Fort Morris, and the insult was not revenged or noticed. Senators in Congress telegraphed to their constituents to seize the national forts, and they were not arrested. The finances of the country were grievously embarrassed. Its little Army was not within reach; the part of it in Texas, with all its stores, was made over by its commander to rebels. One State after another voted in convention to secede. A peace congress, so called, met at the request of Virginia to concert the terms of a capitulation which should secure permission for the continuance of the Union. Congress, in both

branches, sought to devise conciliatory expedients; the Territories of the country were organized in a manner not to conflict with any pretensions of the South, or any decision of the Supreme Court; and, nevertheless, the representatives of the rebellion formed at Montgomery a provisional government, and pursued their relentless purpose with such success that the lieutenant-general feared the city of Washington might find itself "included in a foreign country," and proposed, among the options for the consideration of Lincoln, to bid the wayward States "depart in peace." The great Republic appeared to have its emblem in the vast unfinished Capitol, at that moment surrounded by masses of stone and prostrate columns never yet lifted into their places, seemingly the monument of high but delusive aspirations, the confused wreck of

inchoate magnificence, sadder than any ruin of Egyptian Thebes or Athens.

The fourth of March came. With instinctive wisdom the new President, speaking to the people on taking the oath of office, put aside every question that divided the country, and gained a right to universal support by planting himself on the single idea of union. The Union he declared to be unbroken and perpetual; and he announced his determination to fulfill "the simple duty of taking care that the laws be faithfully executed in all the States." Seven days later the convention of Confederate States unanimously adopted a constitution of their own; and the new government was authoritatively announced to be founded on the idea that the negro race is a slave race; that slavery is its natural and normal condition. The issue was made up, whether the great Re-

public was to maintain its providential place in the history of mankind, or a rebellion founded on negro slavery gain a recognition of its principle throughout the civilized world. To the disaffected Lincoln had said: "You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. To fire the passions of the Southern portion of the people, the Confederate government chose to become aggressors, and, on the morning of the twelfth of April, began the bombardment of Fort Sumter, and compelled its evacuation.

It is the glory of Lincoln that he had perfect faith in the perpetuity of the Union. Supported in advance by Douglas, who spoke as with the voice of a million, he instantly called a meeting of Congress, and summoned the people to come up and repossess the forts, places, and property which had been seized from

the Union. The men of the North were trained in schools; industrious and frugal; many of them delicately bred; their minds teeming with ideas and fertile in plans of enterprise; given to the culture of the arts; eager in the pursuit of wealth, yet employing wealth less for ostentation than for developing the resources of their country; seeking happiness in the calm of domestic life, and such lovers of peace that for generations they had been reputed unwarlike. Now, at the cry of their country in its distress, they rose up with unappeasable patriotism; not hirelings—the purest and of the best blood in the land. Sons of a pious ancestry, with a clear perception of duty, unclouded faith, and fixed resolve to succeed, they thronged around the President to support the wronged, the beautiful flag of the Nation. The halls of theological seminaries sent forth their young men,

whose lips were touched with eloquence, whose hearts kindled with devotion, to serve in the ranks, and make their way to command only as they learned the art of war. Striplings in the colleges, as well the most gentle and the most studious, those of sweetest temper and loveliest character and brightest genius, passed from their classes to the camp. The lumbermen from the forests, the mechanics from their benches, where they had been trained by the exercise of political rights to share the life and hope of the Republic, to feel their responsibility to their forefathers, their posterity, and mankind, went to the front resolved that their dignity as a constituent part of this Republic should not be impaired. Farmers and sons of farmers left the land but half plowed, the grain but half planted, and, taking up the musket, learned to face without fear

the presence of peril and the coming of death in the shocks of war, while their hearts were still attracted to their herds and fields and all the tender affections of home. Whatever there was of truth and faith and public love in the common heart broke out with one expression. The mighty winds blew from every quarter to fan the flame of the sacred and unquenchable fire.

For a time the war was thought to be confined to our own domestic affairs, but it was soon seen that it involved the destinies of mankind; its principles and causes shook the politics of Europe to the center, and from Lisbon to Pekin divided the governments of the world.

There was a Kingdom whose people had in an eminent degree attained to freedom of industry and the security of person and property. Its middle class rose to

greatness. Out of that class sprung the noblest poets and philosophers, whose words built up the intellect of its people; skillful navigators, to find out for its merchants the many paths of the oceans; discoverers in natural science, whose inventions guided its industry to wealth, till it equaled any nation of the world in letters, and excelled all in trade and commerce. But its Government was become a government of land, and not of men; every blade of grass was represented, but only a small minority of the people. In the transition from the feudal forms, the heads of the social organization freed themselves from the military services which were the conditions of their tenure, and, throwing the burden on the industrial classes, kept all the soil to themselves. Vast estates that had been managed by monasteries as endowments for religion and charity were

impropriated to swell the wealth of courtiers and favorites; and the commons where the poor man once had his right of pasture were taken away, and, under forms of law, inclosed distributively within the domains of the adjacent landholders. Although no law forbade any inhabitant from purchasing land, the costliness of the transfer constituted a prohibition; so that it was the rule of the country that the plow should not be in the hands of its owner. The church was rested on a contradiction; claiming to be an embodiment of absolute truth, it was a creature of the statute book.

The progress of time increased the terrible contrast between wealth and poverty. In their years of strength the laboring people, cut off from all share in governing the state, derived a scant support from the severest toil and had no hope for old age

but in public charity or death. A grasping ambition had dotted the world with military posts, kept watch over our borders on the Northeast, at the Bermudas, in the West Indies; appropriated the gates of the Pacific, of the Southern, and of the Indian Ocean; hovered on our Northwest at Vancouver, held the whole of the newest continent and the entrances to the old Mediterranean and Red Sea, and garrisoned forts all the way from Madras to China. That aristocracy had gazed with terror on the growth of a commonwealth where freeholders existed by the million and religion was not in bondage to the state; and now they could not repress their joy at its perils. They had not one word of sympathy for the kind-hearted poor man's son whom America had chosen for her chief; they jeered at his large hands and long feet and un-

gainly stature; and the British secretary of state for foreign affairs made haste to send word through the palaces of Europe that the great Republic was in its agony; that the Republic was no more; that a headstone was all that remained due by the law of nations to "the late Union." But it is written: "Let the dead bury their dead;" they may not bury the living. Let the dead bury their dead; let a bill of reform remove the worn-out government of a class, and infuse new life into the British constitution by confiding rightful power to the people.

But while the vitality of America is indestructible, the British Government hurried to do what never before had been done by Christian powers; what was in direct conflict with its own exposition of public law in the time of our struggle for independence. Though the insurgent

States had not a ship in an open harbor, it invested them with all the rights of a belligerent, even on the ocean; and this, too, when the rebellion was not only directed against the gentlest and most beneficent Government on earth, without a shadow of justifiable cause, but when the rebellion was directed against human nature itself for the perpetual enslavement of a race. And the effect of this recognition was that acts in themselves piratical found shelter in British courts of law. The resources of British capitalists, their workshops, their armories, their private arsenals, their shipyards, were in league with the insurgents, and every British harbor in the wide world became a safe port for British ships, manned by British sailors, and armed with British guns, to prey on our peaceful commerce; even on our ships coming from British

ports, freighted with British products, or that had carried gifts of grain to the English poor. The prime minister, in the House of Commons, sustained by cheers, scoffed at the thought that their laws could be amended at our request so as to preserve real neutrality; and to remonstrances now owned to have been just by their secretary of state answered that they could not change their laws *ad infinitum*.

The people of America then wished, as they always have wished, as they still wish, friendly relations with England, this country has always yearned for good relations with England. Thrice only in all its history has that yearning been fairly met: in the days of Hampden and Cromwell, again in the first ministry of the elder Pitt, and once again in the ministry of Shelburne. Not that there have not at

all times been just men among the peers of Britain—like Halifax in the days of James the Second, or a Granville, an Argyll, or a Houghton in ours; and we can not be indifferent to a country that produces statesmen like Cobden and Bright; but the best bower anchor of peace was the working class of England, who suffered most from our civil war, but who, while they broke their diminished bread in sorrow, always encouraged us to persevere.

The act of recognizing the rebel belligerents was concerted with France—France, so beloved in America, on which she had conferred the greatest benefits that one people ever conferred on another; France, which stands foremost on the continent of Europe for the solidity of her culture, as well as for the bravery and generous impulses of her sons; France, which

for centuries had been moving steadily in her own way toward intellectual and political freedom. The policy regarding further colonization of America by European powers, known commonly as the doctrine of Monroe, had its origin in France; and, if it takes any man's name, should bear the name of Turgot. It was adopted by Louis the Sixteenth, in the cabinet of which Vergennes was the most important member. It is emphatically the policy of France, to which, with transient deviations, the Bourbons, the first Napoleon, the house of Orleans have adhered.

Lincoln was perpetually harassed by rumors that the Emperor Napoleon the Third desired formally to recognize the States in rebellion as an independent Power, and that England held him back by her reluctance, or France by her traditions of freedom, or he himself by his own

better judgment and clear perception of events. But the Republic of Mexico, on our borders, was, like ourselves, distracted by a rebellion, and from a similar cause. The monarchy of England had fastened upon us slavery which did not disappear with independence; in like manner, the ecclesiastical policy established by the Spanish Council of the Indies, in the days of Charles the Fifth and Philip the Second, retained its vigor in the Mexican Republic. The fifty years of civil war under which she had languished was due to the bigoted system which was the legacy of monarchy, just as here the inheritance of slavery kept alive political strife, and culminated in civil war. As with us there could be no quiet but through the end of slavery, so in Mexico there could be no prosperity until the crushing tyranny of intolerance should cease. The

party of slavery in the United States sent their emissaries to Europe to solicit aid; and so did the party of the church in Mexico, as organized by the old Spanish Council of the Indies, but with a different result. Just as the Republican party had made an end of the rebellion, and was establishing the best government ever known in that region, and giving promise to the Nation of order, peace, and prosperity, word was brought us, in the moment of our deepest affliction, that the French Emperor, moved by a desire to erect in North America a buttress for imperialism, would transform the Republic of Mexico into a secundo-geniture for the house of Hapsburg. America might complain; she could not then interpose, and delay seemed justifiable. It was seen that Mexico could not, with all its wealth of land, compete in cereal products with our

Northwest, nor in tropical products with Cuba; nor could it, under a disputed dynasty, attract capital, or create public works, or develop mines, or borrow money; so that the imperial system of Mexico, which was forced at once to recognize the wisdom of the policy of the Republic by adopting it, could prove only an unremunerating drain on the French treasury for the support of an Austrian adventurer.

Meantime a new series of momentous questions grows up, and forces itself on the consideration of the thoughtful. Republicanism has learned how to introduce into its constitution every element of order, as well as every element of freedom; but thus far the continuity of its government has seemed to depend on the continuity of elections. It is now to be considered how perpetuity is to be secured against

foreign occupation. The successor of Charles the First of England dated his reign from the death of his father; the Bourbons, coming back after a long series of revolutions, claimed that the Louis who became King was the eighteenth of that name. The Emperor of the French, disdaining a title from election alone, called himself Napoleon the Third. Shall a republic have less power of continuance when invading armies prevent a peaceful resort to the ballot box? What force shall it attach to intervening legislation? What validity to debts contracted for its overthrow? These momentous questions are, by the invasion of Mexico, thrown up for solution. A free state once truly constituted should be as undying as its people; the Republic of Mexico must rise again.

It was the condition of affairs in Mexico

that involved the Pope of Rome in our difficulties so far that he alone among sovereigns recognized the chief of the Confederate States as a President, and his supporters as a people; and in letters to two great prelates of the Catholic Church in the United States gave counsels for peace at a time when peace meant the victory of secession. Yet events move as they are ordered. The blessing of the Pope at Rome on the head of Duke Maximilian could not revive in the nineteenth century the ecclesiastical policy of the sixteenth; and the result is only a new proof that there can be no prosperity in the state without religious freedom.

When it came home to the consciousness of the Americans that the war which they were waging was a war for the liberty of all the nations of the world, for freedom itself, they thanked God for giving them

strength to endure the severity of the trial to which He put their sincerity, and nerved themselves for their duty with an inexorable will. The President was led along by the greatness of their self-sacrificing example; and as a child, in a dark night on a rugged way, catches hold of the hand of its father for guidance and support, he clung fast to the hand of the people, and moved calmly through the gloom. While the statesmanship of Europe was mocking at the hopeless vanity of their efforts, they put forth such miracles of energy as the history of the world had never known. The contributions to the popular loans amounted in four years to twenty-seven and a half hundred millions of dollars; the revenue of the country from taxation was increased sevenfold. The Navy of the United States, drawing into the public service the

willing militia of the seas, doubled its tonnage in eight months, and established an actual blockade from Cape Hatteras to the Rio Grande; in the course of the war it was increased fivefold in men and in tonnage, while the inventive genius of the country devised more effective kinds of ordnance and new forms of naval architecture in wood and iron. There went into the field for various terms of enlistment about two million men; and in March, 1865, the men in the Army exceeded a million; that is to say, nine of every twenty able-bodied men in the free Territories and States took some part in the war; and at one time every fifth of their able-bodied men was in service. In one single month one hundred and sixty-five thousand men were recruited into service. Once, within four weeks, Ohio organized and placed in the field forty-

two regiments of infantry—nearly thirty-six thousand men; and Ohio was like other States in the East and in the West. The well-mounted cavalry numbered eighty-four thousand; of horses and mules there were bought, from first to last, two-thirds of a million. In the movements of troops science came in aid of patriotism, so that, to choose a single instance out of many, an army twenty-three thousand strong, with its artillery, trains, baggage, and animals, were moved by rail from the Potomac to the Tennessee, twelve hundred miles, in seven days. On the long marches wonders of military construction bridged the rivers, and wherever an army halted ample supplies awaited them at their ever changing base. The vile thought that life is the greatest of blessings did not rise up. In six hundred and twenty-five battles and severe skirmishes blood flowed like

water. It streamed over the grassy plains; it stained the rocks; the undergrowth of the forests was red with it; and the armies marched on with majestic courage from one conflict to another, knowing that they were fighting for God and liberty. The organization of the medical department met its infinitely multiplied duties with exactness and dispatch. At the news of a battle the best surgeons of our cities hastened to the field to offer the untiring aid of the greatest experience and skill. The gentlest and most refined of women left homes of luxury and ease to build hospital tents near the armies and serve as nurses to the sick and dying. Besides the large supply of religious teachers by the public, the congregations spared to their brothers in the field the ablest ministers. The Christian Commission, which expended more than six and a quarter

millions, sent nearly five thousand clergymen, chosen out of the best, to keep unsoiled the religious character of the men, and made gifts of clothes and food and medicine. The organization of private charity assumed unheard-of dimensions. The Sanitary Commission, which had seven thousand societies, distributed, under the direction of an unpaid board, spontaneous contributions to the amount of fifteen millions in supplies or money—a million and a half in money from California alone—and dotted the scene of war, from Paducah to Port Royal, from Belle Plain, Virginia, to Brownsville, Texas, with homes and lodges.

The country had for its allies the river Mississippi, which would not be divided, and the range of mountains which carried the stronghold of the free through western Virginia and Kentucky and Tennessee to

the highlands of Alabama. But it invoked the still higher power of immortal justice. In ancient Greece, where servitude was the universal custom, it was held that if a child were to strike its parent, the slave should defend the parent, and by that act recover his freedom. After vain resistance Lincoln, who had tried to solve the question by gradual emancipation, by colonization, and by compensation, at last saw that slavery must be abolished or the Republic must die; and on the first day of January, 1863, he wrote liberty on the banners of the armies. When this proclamation, which struck the fetters from three millions of slaves, reached Europe, Lord Russell, a countryman of Milton and Wilberforce, eagerly put himself forward to speak of it in the name of mankind, saying: "It is of a very strange nature;" "a measure of war of a very ques-

tionable kind;" an act "of vengeance on the slave owner," that does no more than "profess to emancipate slaves where the United States authorities can not make emancipation a reality." Now, there was no part of the country embraced in the proclamation where the United States could not and did not make emancipation a reality. Those who saw Lincoln most frequently had never before heard him speak with bitterness of any human being; but he did not conceal how keenly he felt that he had been wronged by Lord Russell. And he wrote in reply to other cavils: "The emancipation policy and the use of colored troops were the greatest blows yet dealt to the rebellion; the job was a great national one, and let none be slighted who bore an honorable part in it. I hope peace will come soon and come to stay; then will there be some black men

who can remember that they have helped mankind to this great consummation."

The proclamation accomplished its end, for during the war our armies came into military possession of every State in rebellion. Then, too, was called forth the new power that comes from the simultaneous diffusion of thought and feeling among the nations of mankind. The mysterious sympathy of the millions throughout the world was given spontaneously. The best writers of Europe waked the conscience of the thoughtful till the intelligent moral sentiment of the Old World was drawn to the side of the unlettered statesman of the West. Russia, whose Emperor had just accomplished one of the grandest acts in the course of time by raising twenty millions of bondmen into freeholders, and thus assuring the growth and culture of a Russian people, remained

our unwavering friend. From the oldest abode of civilization, which gave the first example of an imperial government with equality among the people, Prince Kung, the secretary of state for foreign affairs, remembered the saying of Confucius, that we should not do to others what we would not that others should do to us, and in the name of his Emperor read a lesson to European diplomats by closing the ports of China against the war ships and privateers of "the seditious."

The war continued, with all the peoples of the world for anxious spectators. Its cares weighed heavily on Lincoln, and his face was plowed with the furrows of thought and sadness. With malice toward none, free from the spirit of revenge, victory made him importunate for peace; and his enemies never doubted his word or despaired of his abounding clemency. He

longed to utter pardon as the word for all, but not unless the freedom of the negro should be assured. The grand battles of Fort Donelson, Chattanooga, Malvern Hill, Antietam, Gettysburg, the Wilderness of Virginia, Winchester, Nashville, the capture of New Orleans, Vicksburg, Mobile, Fort Fisher, the march from Atlanta, and the capture of Savannah and Charleston, all foretold the issue. Still more, the self-regeneration of Missouri, the heart of the continent; of Maryland, whose sons never heard the midnight bells chime so sweetly as when they rang out to earth and heaven that by the voice of her own people she took her place among the free; of Tennessee, which passed through fire and blood, through sorrows and the shadow of death, to work out her own deliverance, and by the faithfulness of her own sons to renew her youth like the eagle

—proved that victory was deserved and would be worth all that it cost. If words of mercy, uttered as they were by Lincoln on the waters of Virginia, were defiantly repelled, the armies of the country, moving with one will, went as the arrow to its mark, and without a feeling of revenge struck a deathblow at rebellion.

Where in the history of nations had a Chief Magistrate possessed more sources of consolation and joy than Lincoln? His countrymen had shown their love by choosing him to a second term of service. The raging war that had divided the country had lulled; and private grief was hushed by the grandeur of the result. The Nation had its new birth of freedom, soon to be secured forever by an amendment of the Constitution. His persistent gentleness had conquered for him a kindlier feeling on the part of the South. His scoffers

among the grandees of Europe began to do him honor. The laboring classes everywhere saw in his advancement their own. All peoples sent him their benedictions. And at this moment of the height of his fame, to which his humility and modesty added charms, he fell by the hand of the assassin; and the only triumph awarded him was the march to the grave.

This is no time to say that human glory is but dust and ashes, that we mortals are no more than shadows in pursuit of shadows. How mean a thing were man, if there were not that within him which is higher than himself; if he could not master the illusions of sense, and discern the connections of events by a superior light which comes from God. He so shares the divine impulses that he has power to subject interested passions to love of country, and personal ambition to the ennoble-

ment of his kind. Not in vain has Lincoln lived, for he has helped to make this Republic an example of justice, with no caste but the caste of humanity. The heroes who led our armies and ships in battle and fell in the service—Lyon, McPherson, Reynolds, Sedgwick, Wadsworth, Foote, Ward, with their compeers—did not die in vain; they and the myriads of nameless martyrs, and he, the chief martyr, gave up their lives willingly "that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

The assassination of Lincoln, who was so free from malice, has by some mysterious influence struck the country with solemn awe, and hushed, instead of exciting, the passion for revenge. It seems as if the just had died for the unjust. When I think of the friends I have lost in this war—and many have, like myself, lost

some of those whom they most loved—there is no consolation to be derived from victims on the scaffold, or from anything but the established union of the regenerated Nation.

In his character Lincoln was through and through an American. He is the first native of the region west of the Alleghanies to attain to the highest station; and how happy it is that the man who was brought forward as the natural outgrowth and first fruits of that region should have been of unblemished purity in private life, a good son, a kind husband, a most affectionate father, and, as a man, so gentle to all. As to integrity, Douglas, his rival, said of him: "Lincoln is the honestest man I ever knew."

The habits of his mind were those of meditation and inward thought, rather than of action. He delighted to express

his opinions by an apothegm, illustrate them by a parable, or drive them home by a story. He was skillful in analysis; discerned with precision the central idea on which a question turned, and knew how to disengage it and present it by itself in a few homely, strong old English words that would be intelligible to all. He excelled in logical statement, more than in executive ability. He reasoned clearly, his reflective judgment was good, and his purposes were fixed; but, like the Hamlet of his only poet, his will was tardy in action; and for this reason, and not from humility or tenderness of feeling, he sometimes deplored that the duty which devolved on him had not fallen to the lot of another.

Lincoln gained a name by discussing questions which, of all others, most easily lead to fanaticism; but he was never car-

ried away by enthusiastic zeal, never indulged in extravagant language, never hurried to support extreme measures, never allowed himself to be controlled by sudden impulses. During the progress of the election at which he was chosen President he expressed no opinion that went beyond the Jefferson proviso of 1784. Like Jefferson and Lafayette, he had faith in the intuitions of the people, and read those intuitions with rare sagacity. He knew how to bide time, and was less apt to run ahead of public thought than to lag behind. He never thought to electrify the community by taking an advanced position with a banner of opinion, but rather studied to move forward compactly, exposing no detachment in front or rear; so that the course of his Administration might have been explained as the calculating policy of a shrewd and watch-

ful politician, had there not been seen behind it a fixedness of principle which from the first determined his purpose and grew more intense with every year, consuming his life by its energy. Yet his sensibilities were not acute; he had no vividness of imagination to picture to his mind the horrors of the battlefield or the sufferings in hospitals; his conscience was more tender than his feelings.

Lincoln was one of the most unassuming of men. In time of success he gave credit for it to those whom he employed, to the people, and to the providence of God. He did not know what ostentation is; when he became President he was rather saddened than elated, and his conduct and manners showed more than ever his belief that all men are born equal. He was no respecter of persons, and neither rank nor reputation nor services over-

awed him. In judging of character he failed in discrimination, and his appointments were sometimes bad; but he readily deferred to public opinion, and in appointing the head of the armies he followed the manifest preference of Congress.

A good President will secure unity to his Administration by his own supervision of the various Departments. Lincoln, who accepted advice readily, was never governed by any member of his Cabinet, and could not be moved from a purpose deliberately formed; but his supervision of affairs was unsteady and incomplete, and sometimes, by a sudden interference transcending the usual forms, he rather confused than advanced the public business. If he ever failed in the scrupulous regard due to the relative rights of Congress, it was so evidently without design that no conflict could ensue, or evil prece-

dent be established. Truth he would receive from anyone; but when impressed by others he did not use their opinions till by reflection he had made them thoroughly his own.

It was the nature of Lincoln to forgive. When hostilities ceased he, who had always sent forth the flag with every one of its stars in the field, was eager to receive back his returning countrymen, and meditated "some new announcement to the South." The amendment of the Constitution abolishing slavery had his most earnest and unwearied support. During the rage of war we get a glimpse into his soul from his privately suggesting to Louisiana that "in defining the franchise some of the colored people might be let in," saying: "They would probably help, in some trying time to come, to keep the jewel of liberty in the family of freedom."

In 1857 he avowed himself "not in favor of" what he improperly called "negro citizenship;" for the Constitution discriminates between citizens and electors. Three days before his death he declared his preference that "the elective franchise were now conferred on the very intelligent of the colored men and on those of them who served our cause as soldiers;" but he wished it done by the States themselves, and he never harbored the thought of exacting it from a new government as a condition of its recognition.

The last day of his life beamed with sunshine, as he sent by the Speaker of the House of Representatives his friendly greetings to the men of the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific slope; as he contemplated the return of hundreds of thousands of soldiers to fruitful industry; as he welcomed in advance hundreds of thousands

of emigrants from Europe; as his eye kindled with enthusiasm at the coming wealth of the Nation. And so, with these thoughts for his country, he was removed from the toils and temptations of this life and was at peace.

Hardly had Lincoln been consigned to the grave when the prime minister of England died, full of years and honors. Palmerston traced his lineage to the time of the Conqueror; Lincoln went back only to his grandfather. Palmerston received his education from the best scholars of Harrow, Edinburgh, and Cambridge; Lincoln's early teachers were the silent forest, the prairie, the river, and the stars. Palmerston was in public life for sixty years; Lincoln for but a tenth of that time. Palmerston was a skillful guide of an established aristocracy; Lincoln a leader or rather a companion of the peo-

ple. Palmerston was exclusively an Englishman, and made his boast in the House of Commons that the interest of England was his shibboleth; Lincoln thought always of mankind as well as his own country, and served human nature itself. Palmerston, from his narrowness as an Englishman, did not endear his country to any one court or to any one nation, but rather caused general uneasiness and dislike; Lincoln left America more beloved than ever by all the peoples of Europe. Palmerston was self-possessed and adroit in reconciling the conflicting factions of the aristocracy; Lincoln, frank and ingenuous, knew how to poise himself on the ever moving opinions of the masses. Palmerston was capable of insolence toward the weak, quick to the sense of honor, not heedful of right; Lincoln rejected counsel given only as a mat-

ter of policy, and was not capable of being willfully unjust. Palmerston, essentially superficial, delighted in banter and knew how to divert grave opposition by playful levity; Lincoln was a man of infinite jest on his lips, with saddest earnestness at his heart. Palmerston was a fair representative of the aristocratic liberality of the day, choosing for his tribunal, not the conscience of humanity, but the House of Commons; Lincoln took to heart the eternal truths of liberty, obeyed them as the commands of Providence, and accepted the human race as the judge of his fidelity. Palmerston did nothing that will endure; Lincoln finished a work which all time can not overthrow. Palmerston is a shining example of the ablest of a cultivated aristocracy; Lincoln is the genuine fruit of institutions where the laboring man shares and assists to form the great ideas and

designs of his country. Palmerston was buried in Westminster Abbey by the order of his Queen, and was attended by the British aristocracy to his grave, which after a few years will hardly be noticed by the side of the graves of Fox and Chatham; Lincoln was followed by the sorrow of his country across the continent to his resting place in the heart of the Mississippi Valley, to be remembered through all time by his countrymen and by all the peoples of the world.

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